



WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT TO THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR 2020

The Management Committee of Williamsburgh Housing Association has now completed the second annual assessment of compliance with the Regulatory Framework and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

In carrying out the review, we are satisfied that we have seen and considered sufficient appropriate and reliable evidence to confirm our level of assurance that, to the best of our knowledge and understanding, Williamsburgh Housing Association Ltd complies with the relevant RSL regulatory requirements set out in the Regulatory Framework.

The process that has been adopted follows the good practice advice that is provided in the Scottish Federation of Housing Association (SFHA) Toolkit (published in 2019 and updated in 2020). Additional consideration has also been given to SFHA's supplementary guidance on gaining evidence-based assurance about compliance in the context of the pandemic.

Our Evidence Bank combines reports, policies, advice and information which the Management Committee monitors and oversees throughout the year to provide continuous assurance that we remain compliant.

In addition to the above, the Evidence Bank incorporates other relevant documents and information that contribute to our assurance and contribute to the control of our business and governance activities.

Further to the annual Evidence Bank review, and learning from the 2019 process, we also introduced a quarterly Annual Assurance report in order to ensure the process was routinely addressed by Committee and to consider whether any changes or updates were required to the statement during the course of the year. We can also formally record that there were no required changes to our Assurance status since the 2019 statement.

COVID-19

In considering our compliance with our legal and regulatory requirements, we have also taken account of the considerable impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the consequent impact on our employees, our business and service disruption to our customers.

We continue to comply with the temporary changes to legislation, and to follow national requirements and advice from the Scottish Government and the Social Housing Resilience Group (SHRG).

We have kept our Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Lead Regulator updated on how we have been addressing Covid-19 and other major challenges throughout the year and officially record our thanks for support provided to RSL's by the Scottish Housing Regulator during this challenging period.

We recognise that there has of course been disruption and delay to service provision during this period, however, we have met the challenges to the ever changing landscape head on and are now operating a full service, whilst complying with government guidance.

We have redesigned service delivery to ensure that full corporate governance oversight, health and safety responsibilities and financial control have been maintained throughout.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Whilst declaring our compliance, we would like, in the interests of transparency, to draw attention to three areas we have identified for improvement. We have reviewed these areas and have assured ourselves that they are non-material however we would like to highlight them for priority in our action plan for the coming year:

EQUALITIES REQUIREMENTS

- We firmly believe we are an equal opportunities organisation and offer fair and equal treatment to all. We look forward to working with the guidance framework that is being developed by SHR for the sector in order to support a better evidence base in this area. We acknowledge that SHR will be assessing landlords' compliance with the requirement from 1 April 2021 and we are improving our evidence base to ensure that we are assured that we have a sound basis for meeting the equalities requirements within the standards.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

COMMITTEE APPRAISAL PROCESS

- At the time of writing the 2020 Committee appraisal process has not been fully completed as has been delayed due to Covid-19. We are confident that the process will be complete by 31st December 2020.

INVOLVING TENANTS IN PREPARATION AND SCRUTINY OF SERVICE INFORMATION

- It has been some time since a meeting of our Residents Focus Group. We will introduce alternative digital and non-digital methods of improving direct customer feed-back in all areas of our business.

APPROVAL

The Management Committee approved this Annual Assurance Statement at their meeting held on 11th November 2020 and authorised it to be signed on behalf of the Committee, by the Chairperson, Susan James, and subsequently submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and made publically available to our tenants and customers.

We will notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the course of the year ahead and confirm that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

Susan James

Chairperson

Williamsburgh Housing Association

11th November 2020